

## Chapter 59

# Information Management and Strategic Communication for Institutional Change in Ethiopia: The Case of SNNPRs

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### ABSTRACT

*The growing need for institutional effectiveness and efficiency in meeting institutionally set objectives cannot be seen independent of information management and strategic communication. As a result, information management and strategic communication practices have become quite useful to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions. To find out the information management and strategic communication situation in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional state (SNNPRs) in Ethiopia, primary data were collected from nine zonal departments in selected three most populated zones namely Sidama, Gedeo and Hadiya among the 13 zones in the regional state. The study of the information management and strategic communication activities in the three zones was believed to indicate the overall performance in the public administration practices of the region where the three zones alone comprised almost 40% from 15 million population of the regional state. As part of the study, some secondary sources were also used and relevant literature was reviewed. Then, the data were classified using sex, age, qualification and experience, and also analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean value, standard deviation, T-test and correlation analysis. Based on the analysis, it was found out that the information management and strategic communication practice was less effective due to its intuitional placement where the section was given no or little importance in the institutional administration. Besides, it was found out that most of the challenges and problems related to Business Processing and Reengineering (BPR) implementation for institutional change in the state were quite related to the*

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*marginalization of information management and communication practices along with the inadequacy of finance and office equipment, and poor office situations like in the case of Gedeo zone. Actually there was better institutional change/reform in the public administration practices of Hadiya zone than the rest two zones. There was a strong correlation among the zones in information exchange level and challenges of BPR implementation. There was, indeed, about 63% success story in reducing process time, and more than 50% in reducing cost and about 50% success in proper use of resources and creating accountability in Hadiya zone though much more is expected. Sidama and Gedeo zones seem to have by far low successes in BPR implementation.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This study focuses on information management and strategic communication activities of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRs) in Ethiopia with the objective to find out how public administration activities are carried out in line with new organizational set up while implementing Business Processing and Reengineering (BPR) in the region. Today, the activities of information management and strategic communication have greater importance in our information era. This is because the vast expanding nature of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the one hand, and the growing need for institutional efficiency and effectiveness on the other have necessitated the demand for information management and strategic communication. Information is a major means to come to understand about the social, cultural, economic and political establishments. Information is the way people sustain their social relations and the means they secure power. If information is a means to secure power, then power is on those who possess information.

In fact, having the information by itself is not sufficient, so there is a need to pass the information from the source of the information to recipient of the information. Communication, especially strategic communication, then becomes necessary to effectively pass the pieces of information that entail different issues from source to its destination. The issues that pass from the source to the destination may include developmental, administrative, political, or issues of the different gamut of life. Particularly, however, strategic communication in institutions is concerned; the focus goes to how communication enhances smooth relationships among stakeholders for effective and efficient administration as well as for institutional change or success. Consequently, information management and strategic communication practices have been growing with much importance in our today's growing business of the private sector and also in the ever widening nature of governmental institutions because of their increasing responsibilities towards meeting the public needs. So the study in this area is quite useful for social, economic, political and business practices. Particularly, such study is quite useful in brining better public administration in Ethiopia in general and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional state in particular.

So the study aims at examining the place of information management and strategic communication in the public administration activities of the three major zones in the region namely Sidama, Hadiya and Gedeo. Relatively, Sidama and Hadiya zones seem to have better office infrastructure and larger population than Gedeo zone. Moreover, Gedeo zone has not been much institutionalized compared to the two. However, all the three zonal administrations were restructured by new public administration system after 1991 with the coming of the incumbent government. There have been also successive attempts by the Ethiopian national government to create efficient, effective and responsive public administration.

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